

**1995 Review and Extension Conference
of the Parties to the Treaty on the
Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

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1995 REVIEW AND EXTENSION CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE
TREATY ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 4th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 19 April 1995, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. DHANAPALA (Sri Lanka)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. NZO (South Africa) said that South Africa had played an active part in the work of the Preparatory Committee and, in response to General Assembly resolution 49/75 F, had provided a legal analysis of the extension options contained in article X, paragraph 2 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It was committed to a policy of non-proliferation and arms control covering all weapons of mass destruction and extending to conventional weapons. That policy was integral to its commitment to democracy, human rights, sustainable development, social justice and environmental protection.
2. The dramatic changes brought about by the end of the cold war had created the global environment in which it had been possible for the number of nuclear weapons to be reduced. The international community now had a unique opportunity to achieve the basic objectives of the Treaty. It was South Africa's fundamental belief that the Treaty should not be placed in jeopardy, and that the review and extension process should strengthen, not weaken, the non-proliferation regime. South Africa firmly believed that the security of individual countries, and of the international community as a whole, would be severely damaged if the Treaty were weakened.
3. South Africa had taken the decision to destroy its nuclear weapons and become a State party to the Treaty because it felt that its security would be guaranteed by the Treaty's provisions. Since the entry into force of the Treaty, the number of threshold States had diminished, and several countries, including South Africa, had drawn back from the nuclear-weapon option and become a part of a nuclear non-proliferation regime. Furthermore, the Treaty was the only international instrument on nuclear disarmament to which all five nuclear-weapon States were bound. Its continued existence would ensure that that commitment by nuclear-weapon States remained.
4. South Africa believed that the inequalities inherent in the Treaty, as well as the criticism of some of its provisions, should not be dealt with in such a way that they threatened the security that the Treaty provided. South Africa therefore supported the view that the Treaty should be extended indefinitely. The termination of the Treaty, whether by placing conditions on its future existence or extending it only for a fixed period, was not an acceptable option. The linkage of the Treaty to certain conditions raised the question, inter alia, of what would happen if the conditions were not met. However, there was concern that proper checks and balances should be put in place to ensure that the objectives of the Treaty were translated into reality.
5. The decision on extension should be taken only after every effort had been made to achieve the broadest possible support. Any decision taken by a simple majority would weaken the Treaty and undermine the commitment of those left on the outside. While a consensus decision would be ideal, the decision must be taken by a significant majority, which would need to include key countries from across group boundaries.

6. A mechanism must be found to address the concerns expressed about the implementation of the Treaty. The review process provided for in article VIII should be strengthened. That could be done by adopting a set of principles for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament which would set out the general obligations and goals which States parties would strive for, taking into account the prevailing international environment. The principles would not constitute an amendment to the Treaty; commitment to them would be renewed at every review to ensure that they were dynamic and corresponded to changing international circumstances. They would not be conditions which could lead to the termination of the Treaty, but a yardstick by which all States parties could measure their achievement.

7. The following broad issues should be taken into account when formulating the principles: restatement of the commitment to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons; strengthening of and full adherence to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguard agreements; access to nuclear material and technology for peaceful purposes; progress in the negotiations on a treaty on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for weapons purposes, the reduction of nuclear arsenals and negotiations for the establishment of a comprehensive test-ban treaty; commitment to the establishment of regional nuclear-weapon-free zones, and the enforcement of binding security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States.

8. South Africa proposed that a committee should be established - either open-ended or consisting of a representative group of countries - which would be responsible for studying the review process and making concrete recommendations on how to improve and strengthen the review conference mechanism. The report on its recommendations should be submitted for the consideration of all States parties, possibly at an additional Preparatory Committee session prior to the review conference in the year 2000. The Preparatory Committee should then be responsible for including those improvements in the agenda and programme of work of the next review conference.

9. South Africa had a number of initial suggestions which could be considered by such a committee. It believed that the basic structure of the review conferences should be retained, but that subcommittees of the three main committees should be established in order to take up specific issues falling within the ambit of the Treaty provisions which were being considered by the parent main committee. It proposed the adoption of a set of principles for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and the establishment of an open-ended committee which would meet at fixed intervals during the period between review conferences and consider specific ways of strengthening all aspects of the Treaty and the non-proliferation regime.

10. South Africa agreed that the disarmament provisions contained in article VI were essential for the effective implementation of the Treaty. It welcomed the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START I) and the Treaty on the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START II) and believed that steps should be taken to accelerate the pace of nuclear disarmament and achieve the earliest possible conclusion of a START III agreement. Consideration should also be given to including the arsenals of the other nuclear-weapon States in the process. South Africa welcomed the security

assurances embodied in Security Council resolution 984 (1995) and in the statements made in the Security Council by the five nuclear-weapon States. However, it remained convinced that the most effective way to address the issue was the negotiation, by all the States parties, of an international agreement prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States parties. South Africa believed that nuclear-weapon-free zones gave an added dimension to the security provided by the Treaty. It was an active supporter of an African nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty and would be hosting the next meeting of the Group of Experts preparing the text for such a treaty.

11. With regard to article III, South Africa supported the principle of strengthened safeguards as well as the work that was being done by IAEA. It had been participating in field trials and in principle supported the idea of including environmental monitoring as an integral part of the safeguards system, but needed time to obtain an opinion on the legal implications of such a system, as well as more information on the cost implications. It urged greater transparency on the part of the nuclear-weapon States; that would help allay concerns and suspicions regarding the manner in which they were meeting their responsibilities under the Treaty.

12. With regard to article IV, South Africa was participating in the IAEA Technical Cooperation Programme and was strongly in favour of the exchange of technology for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy between the developed and developing world, based on the concept of sustainable development. South Africa was currently a host country for the training of scientists and technicians from Africa. It had supported the establishment by IAEA of a Standing Advisory Group on Technical Assistance and Cooperation (SAGTAC), and believed that SAGTAC should convene a meeting of all interested parties, particularly the developing countries, to discuss specific problem areas in the field of nuclear technology transfer. South Africa, with its extensive nuclear infrastructure and competencies, was also participating actively in many projects in Africa under the African Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology; it would strongly support greater levels of involvement on the part of the developed world in the transfer of peaceful nuclear technologies to the developing world, and especially to Africa.

13. Democratic South Africa saw international and regional security being achieved by complete nuclear disarmament. The South African experience - that security was provided by nuclear disarmament rather than by nuclear proliferation - was significant, not only for the threshold States, but also for the acknowledged nuclear-weapon States. South Africa believed that, with the necessary political will, it was possible to create a world free of nuclear weapons.

14. Ms. HALONEN (Finland) said that the Conference had a momentous decision to take which would have a lasting impact on international peace and security. The Conference should once and for all remove any uncertainty about the permanence of the Treaty. Finland had joined the Treaty because it saw it as contributing to its national security and economic development. It had no regrets.

15. The Treaty had stood the test of time; it had become a global norm, upheld by the vast majority of the States. Even those States which might harbour nuclear-weapon ambitions were not willing to say so publicly. When non-compliance had been established beyond the shadow of a doubt, as in the case of Iraq, the international community had upheld the Treaty with determination. When compliance had been and was in doubt, as in the case of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the international community needed to insist that the doubts be removed to its satisfaction.

16. Important work had been initiated by IAEA to strengthen its role in verifying the non-existence of undeclared nuclear activities. Finland was a strong supporter of "Programme 93+2", and believed that the Conference should support the measures called for in that programme. Finland had accepted IAEA safeguards on all its nuclear activities, both current and future. It also required acceptance of full-scope safeguards by any non-nuclear-weapon recipient of nuclear transfers from its territory. The Conference should urge those few suppliers which did not yet do so to require such a condition without delay. That condition derived from the general obligation under the Treaty not to assist in any way in the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

17. The non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty had a legitimate right to assurances against nuclear aggression. Finland therefore welcomed the unanimous adoption of Security Council resolution 984 (1995). For Finland, as a non-nuclear-weapon State, the ultimate goal remained the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Indefinite extension of the Treaty would provide the necessary framework for renewed efforts towards nuclear disarmament. Article VI would become a permanent obligation. Indefinite extension would also send a clear message to those few States that still remained outside the Treaty that the Treaty was permanent and that to remain outside was to remain in the cold. The Treaty was there also to help if a non-State party decided to change its mind. South Africa had shown that it could be done. Finland hoped that India, Israel and Pakistan would also become States parties. Finland welcomed the recent steps towards the consolidation of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, as well as the progress made towards the denuclearization of Africa.

18. The nuclear-arms race was over; the threat of a global nuclear war had receded beyond the horizon. The Conference should recognize that historic change. The number of nuclear weapons was rapidly decreasing. Finland urged rapid withdrawal from operational use of all the remaining tactical nuclear weapons and their subsequent elimination. A comprehensive and verifiable nuclear-test-ban treaty would complement other efforts towards nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. That treaty must ban all nuclear explosions. The technological hopes of the 1960s that nuclear explosions could be used for peaceful purposes had turned out to be misguided; there was no justification for conducting such explosions. The Conference should note that article V was in fact a dead letter; that would benefit the negotiations on a comprehensive test ban. There was also an urgent need for a multilateral ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear explosive purposes so as to cap the bomb-making ability not only of the five nuclear-weapon States but also of those which still remained outside the Treaty.

19. Mr. GORE (United States of America) said that, like those who had gathered 50 years earlier to create the United Nations, the international community was assembled at a moment of unusual opportunity and great risk. The confrontation between the United States and the former Soviet Union had ended, and their Governments had put behind them a relationship based on a nuclear balance of terror, profoundly diminishing but not eliminating the risk of nuclear war.

20. The struggle to block the proliferation of nuclear weapons had entered a critical phase. The knowledge and capacity to build nuclear weapons was increasingly available, and although most countries had recognized that the acquisition of nuclear weapons would bring greater insecurity and danger, the few seeking them had an increasing possibility of succeeding. The diminishing risk that nuclear war would be caused by one rivalry was offset by an increasing risk that it would be caused by others.

21. At the time of its creation, the Treaty had represented a delicate balance between competing and seemingly irreconcilable interests. After a quarter century of experience, it must be determined whether the cause of peace was best served by continuing the Treaty under temporary arrangements, or by using the one-time option to give it a permanent basis by supporting its indefinite extension without conditions.

22. The case for indefinite extension could be stated succinctly. The Treaty created a more secure world for all its members, nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike. By providing an internationally recognized, verifiable means for States to forswear nuclear weapons forever, the Treaty helped to prevent regional rivalries from evolving into arms races. By making it possible for the vast majority of the world's nations to remain non-nuclear without jeopardizing their security, the Treaty reinforced the global stability that was a necessary foundation for progress in arms control and disarmament.

23. The principal arguments directed against indefinite extension were that the Treaty was inherently discriminatory, that the nuclear-weapon States had failed to live up to their commitments under article VI, that indefinite extension would free the nuclear-weapon States from further pressure to disarm, that the Treaty exposed non-nuclear States to intimidation by nuclear-weapon States and States not party to the Treaty, and that it would destroy the capacity of the agreement to be adapted to future circumstances.

24. The Treaty had recognized an initial division of States between those possessing nuclear weapons and those pledged not to acquire them, but it did not create a permanent class of nuclear-weapon States. Rather, those States had a binding legal obligation under article VI to pursue negotiations in good faith on arms control and disarmament. Indefinite extension would ensure the permanence of that obligation and create the conditions for its ultimate achievement. Some also argued that the nuclear-weapon States had failed to live up to their commitments under article VI, but the evidence strongly supported the case that they were moving in the direction prescribed by their obligations under the Treaty. The United States and Russia, under the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) had eliminated an entire class of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. The combined results of the START I and START II Treaties would be a two-thirds reduction in the nuclear arsenals of those two countries.

They had also agreed not to target their remaining nuclear missiles. In addition, the United States had stopped producing fissile materials for nuclear explosives, and had launched a new global effort to halt their production anywhere in the world. In 1994, the United States had for the first time submitted weapons material from its stockpile to IAEA safeguards. To propel further the effort to negotiate a comprehensive test ban treaty, the United States had extended its moratorium on nuclear tests, and a previous proposal for a ten-year withdrawal provision had been withdrawn. If the Conference on Disarmament was successful, it was possible that the United States had already conducted its last nuclear test. He paid tribute to Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, which had become parties to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States, as had South Africa, which had rid itself of its nuclear weapons in order to join the Treaty.

25. Rather than indefinite extension, some argued that the best way to ensure that the nuclear-weapon States moved towards disarmament was to subject it to periodic live-or-die votes, or by extending it with conditions. Yet there were serious flaws in that argument. It was worth noting that even a review period of 25 years was well within the service lifetime of a major nuclear weapons system. In practical effect, rolling periods of review could have the same consequences as an immediate decision to terminate the Treaty. Making the Treaty subject to periodic risk would encourage States which aspired to nuclear weapons to hold their options in reserve, rather than to accept the permanence of their obligations under the Treaty.

26. Nuclear-weapon States clearly understood that damaging the NPT also damaged their own security, and thus had strong motives to refrain from nuclear threats and instead to provide credible assurances designed to allay the concerns of others. In fact, the United States and the other four nuclear-weapon States had just provided positive and negative security assurances to the international community. In addition, the success of the NPT built a barrier against nuclear threats by establishing a global norm of non-proliferation. In response to the argument that indefinite extension would destroy its ability to meet changing circumstances, radical changes had taken place in the world in recent years which the Treaty had handled without difficulty. Furthermore, reserves of flexibility were built into the procedures for review and amendment, and would not be altered by a decision to extend it indefinitely and without conditions.

27. In an era in which super-Power confrontation had been replaced by cooperation to eliminate nuclear arms, but in which the dangers of nuclear proliferation were increasingly apparent, the Treaty remained central to the cause of peace. He called for support of the indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty, because it was deeply in the security interests of all.

28. Legislative bodies throughout the world, in ratifying the Treaty, had accepted that they would be bound by a decision made by the majority of the parties. Any suggestion that the decision might be made through a secret ballot undermined the confidence placed in those legislative bodies. Nations which called for accountability must accept its burdens. The United States strongly rejected any notion that the decisions of the Conference could not stand the light of day, and called on all countries to take responsibility for their actions.

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29. The international community had learned what those who were present at the creation of the atomic age could only hope: that proliferation could be halted, and that nations could work together to protect their mutual security. There could be no rest until those goals, and the Treaty, became enduring realities.

30. Mr. KABARITI (Jordan) said that, in reflecting on the achievements and future goals of the NPT after 25 years, the Treaty had succeeded in preventing an increase in the number of declared nuclear-weapon States, although certain States had been able to escape the controls of the international non-proliferation regime and produce nuclear weapons. It had also succeeded in promoting the renunciation of the production and development of nuclear weapons and in portraying any State which sought to acquire such weapons as an international outlaw. The Treaty had linked the question of proliferation with increased danger of nuclear war, and had drawn attention to the dangers of a regional arms race. It had provided the IAEA safeguards system with the legal authority to carry out its tasks, as well.

31. The impossibility of achieving complete nuclear disarmament, as it appeared at the end of the 1960s, had not discouraged the international community from seeking to achieve that goal. The horizontal non-proliferation of nuclear weapons had been considered a temporary solution to that dilemma, but the ultimate aim of the Treaty was complete nuclear disarmament. The reasons why complete nuclear disarmament, and even the less ambitious goal of a comprehensive nuclear test ban, had not been achieved, should be explored.

32. The obligations imposed on nuclear States by article VI were clear. The first, i.e. the cessation of the nuclear arms race, had been achieved between the two super-Powers following the end of the cold war, but not at the regional level. The emergence of so-called threshold States had aggravated the problem because such States presented a strong incentive to neighbouring States to acquire nuclear weapons. Fulfilment of the second obligation under article VI, i.e. overall nuclear disarmament, was still distant despite progress achieved bilaterally between the two super-Powers; more distant still was general and complete disarmament, the third obligation under article VI. While Jordan viewed with satisfaction the moratorium on nuclear tests by four of the five nuclear powers, it considered that neither the nuclear-test moratorium nor a binding treaty, if achieved, would fulfil the obligation of the nuclear powers under the Treaty to undertake general and complete nuclear disarmament. Accordingly, Jordan hoped for the early finalization of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, to be followed by other steps towards that ultimate goal.

33. Jordan noted with deep appreciation the services offered by the IAEA in the area of provision of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes to non-nuclear States. It called upon those States that possessed nuclear technology to enable the Agency to overcome existing obstacles to providing nuclear energy to developing countries for peaceful uses and to the efficient and effective implementation of the safeguards system.

34. The refusal of some States possessing nuclear capabilities to accede to the Treaty reduced its efficacy as well as the commitment of States parties to fully implement its provisions. For example, Israel had consistently refused to

accede to the Treaty for the past quarter century, despite other recent successes in the Middle East peace process. Israel's accession to the Treaty and placement of all its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards would help achieve such positive results as preventing the occurrence of potentially disastrous nuclear accidents, accelerating negotiations within the framework of the Arms Control and Regional Security Group, enhancing the progress of and building confidence in other parts of the peace process in general, mitigating the regional arms race to foster economic and social development in the region, and bolstering the universality of the Treaty by encouraging other States not parties to accede to it. Jordan believed it would be very difficult to convince the peoples in the region of Israel's credibility, seriousness and desire for a just, durable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East if Israel continued its intransigence and refusal to accede to the Treaty or place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards.

35. Israel's accession to the Treaty would also pave the way towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapons-free zone in the region, in accordance with the numerous General Assembly resolutions to that effect adopted over the previous two decades. However, those resolutions had yet to be implemented, and the nuclear powers had a major responsibility for establishing such zones both in the Middle East and in the world at large. To date, only the Treaties of Tlatelolco and Rarotonga had been concluded to establish such zones in inhabited areas, although a treaty to establish such a zone in Africa was about to be opened for signature.

36. The security assurances given to the non-nuclear-weapon States in compensation for their renunciation of the nuclear option did not provide those States with sufficient security. Rather, what were required were comprehensive, legally binding and unconditional security assurances, both positive and negative, along the lines of the non-use and non-first use of nuclear weapons. The role of the Security Council in that regard extended to monitoring of the implementation of Treaty provisions and the even-handed prevention of further nuclear-weapons proliferation. However, the Treaty lacked implementation machinery or sanctions regimes, relying for those functions on the IAEA and the Charter of the United Nations respectively. It was therefore imperative that the Conference should concentrate on finding solutions to those shortcomings in the Treaty before considering the question of extending it. While reaffirming the utmost importance of the Treaty's continuing to play its vital role, Jordan also reaffirmed the need for the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil their obligations under the Treaty by:

- (1) Intensifying their efforts to achieve a general and complete nuclear disarmament, by concluding a Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and a treaty banning the production of fissile material;
- (2) Making additional efforts to provide nuclear technology for peaceful purposes to non-nuclear States;
- (3) Working to provide comprehensive, legally binding and effective security assurances, both positive and negative, to non-nuclear-weapon States, and working towards a treaty committing the nuclear powers to the non-use and non-first use of nuclear weapons;

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- (4) Securing the universality of the Treaty by exercising pressure on States with nuclear capability like Israel that remained outside the Treaty framework and ending regional nuclear-arms races;
- (5) Enhancing the role of the Security Council in observing the Treaty implementation and even-handedly promoting its universality;
- (6) Supporting the effectiveness of the International Atomic Energy Agency by enhancing its system of guarantees and increasing its human and financial resources; and
- (7) Encouraging the establishment of nuclear-weapons-free zones throughout the world, with priority for the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East in order to avoid the dangers to the peace process posed by the presence there of nuclear weapons.

37. Jordan was motivated by its commitment to achieving peace and consolidating stability and security in the Middle East and the world at large. As the main pillar of the international non-proliferation regime, the Treaty required review and constructive criticism from time to time in order to strengthen it and ensure its universality.

38. Mr. MWAMBULUKUTU (United Republic of Tanzania) said that Tanzania had always regarded the Treaty as an important instrument for arms control, and was aware of the significant role it had played in discouraging horizontal proliferation. However, the nuclear-weapon States had failed to fully meet their obligations under article VI in the area of progress towards total nuclear disarmament. Tanzania welcomed the call of the United Nations Secretary-General for the reduction and destruction of all nuclear weapons and the means to make them. The past 25 years had witnessed an unprecedented nuclear arms race, with the majority of those weapons having been deployed after the Treaty came into force in 1970. Other risks remained as well, such as those of weapons-grade material falling into the wrong hands, as well as of nuclear accidents. The international community was responsible for ensuring that such leakages did not lead to unbridled proliferation.

39. The Treaty itself had fundamental shortcomings which compromised its effective functioning, as for example its failure to address the imbalance between the nuclear States, with their stockpiled arsenals, and the non-nuclear States, which had voluntarily given up any ambition to acquire nuclear capability. Non-nuclear States had further expressed their commitment to nuclear disarmament in their decisions to voluntarily establish nuclear-weapons-free zones in various regions of the world.

40. Another area of great concern to the majority of States parties was the imbalance between nuclear and non-nuclear States in the application of the safeguards regime provided for under article III; such safeguards should also not be used as a pretext for denying States parties access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

41. Tanzania paid tribute to the vital role of the IAEA in implementing the Treaty, and called for its resources to be increased so that it could fulfil its

responsibilities in channelling the transfer of peaceful nuclear technology and for assistance to developing countries. Tanzania was indebted to the IAEA for its technical assistance and promotion of regional cooperation ventures through the African Regional Cooperative Agreement (AFRA).

42. To date, efforts to provide security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States had fallen short of the legally binding instrument those States required, in which nuclear-weapon States would reaffirm the non-use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. However, Tanzania looked forward to the conclusion of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and continued to view that Treaty as a cornerstone for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons.

43. Tanzania was strongly of the view that continuing with the Treaty in its present form was to perpetuate the inequalities inherent in it, and to legitimize the existence of deadly weapons in the hands of the few. Unconditional and indefinite extension of the Treaty was surely not a viable option if the past was to determine the future; any decision on extension of the Treaty should reflect the interests of the powerful and less-powerful alike.

44. Mr. AL-SHARA' (Syrian Arab Republic) said that the Treaty was not an end in itself, but rather a step towards limiting the proliferation of nuclear weapons and towards their total eradication. However, in the first 25 years of its operation, the Treaty had not succeeded in ridding the world of nuclear weapons; nor had the nuclear States parties lived up to their commitments to eradicate nuclear weapons, prevent their proliferation, or even to assist non-nuclear States parties in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Some of the nuclear-weapon States parties had even obstructed the transfer of peaceful nuclear technology to non-nuclear-weapon States parties, which had abided by its provisions, while channelling sophisticated technology to Israel, which had steadfastly refused to sign the Treaty. That in turn had paved the way for Israel's acquisition of military nuclear capabilities, in contravention of the letter and spirit of the Treaty.

45. Syria believed that the international community had a unique opportunity to undertake a comprehensive review of the Treaty, to set up machinery that would guarantee the eradication of nuclear weapons and their manufacture, and destroy stockpiles of such weapons throughout the world. His country believed that the Treaty would remain unable to achieve its objectives as long as all the States of the world without exception did not accede to it and abide by its provisions. Adherence to the Treaty was even more crucial at the regional level. In that regard, it was unreasonable to require the Arab States of the Middle East region, who had proved their commitment to the Treaty for over a quarter of a century, to extend it unconditionally and indefinitely while Israel, which was known to have a military nuclear programme, refused to accede to it. Moreover, Israel not only categorically sidestepped the requirements of a comprehensive peace with its immediate neighbours, but consistently thwarted any efforts to achieve such a peace and strenuously objected to the legitimate right of any State in the region to develop a peaceful nuclear programme under international inspection and control.

46. In a resolution adopted unanimously by the Council of the League of Arab States, Syria and all the Arab States had expressed their deep concern at that

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critical situation in the region. The resolution had stressed inter alia that the entrenchment of the status quo whereby all the States of the Middle East with the exception of Israel were committed to the non-proliferation system constituted a dangerous and unacceptable balance that threatened the region's security and stability.

47. Syria had remained faithful to its obligations under the Treaty and on different occasions had made positive contributions to the promotion of stability and security in the region. At the Paris Conference on Chemical Weapons in 1989 it had put forward an initiative to rid the Middle East region of all nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction under the auspices of the United Nations. Proceeding from its concern for the security and stability of the region, Syria could not agree to the extension of the Treaty unless Israel acceded to it and subjected its nuclear installations to international inspection. That position did not emanate from a wish or intention to set aside the objectives of the Treaty but rather from Syria's categorical rejection of the presence of nuclear weapons in the Middle East without any genuine international efforts being made to eliminate such weapons. Furthermore, had the Conference suspended its activities for a reasonable period of time to try to make all possible efforts to arrive at an international consensus which would help to remove the loopholes in the Treaty and ensure both its effectiveness and universality by obtaining the accession of all the States of the world to it without exception, Syria would not have objected to its extension.

48. Syria nevertheless remained committed to the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East region as well as to the universality of the non-proliferation Treaty.

49. Mr. GODAL (Norway) said that the threat of nuclear war no longer derived from super-Power rivalry in a bipolar world but from the spread of nuclear weapons and associated technologies, material and expertise to areas of political tension and internal unrest. In the view of the Norwegian Government, the non-proliferation Treaty was the most important instrument at the international community's disposal in the efforts to counter that threat. While no other multilateral arms control agreement had obtained the support of so many countries, he none the less believed that the most serious drawback of the Treaty, as the only legally binding instrument of global application in the field of nuclear arms control and disarmament, was that it did not have a permanent status.

50. In his Government's view, the Treaty should be extended indefinitely and be granted unlimited duration for a number of important reasons. It served as a barrier against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and held out the promise of a world free of nuclear weapons. It was an instrument for assessing and influencing the disarmament efforts undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States in accordance with their obligations under article VI of the Treaty. The review mechanism would continue to be an integral and vital part of the Treaty once a decision on extension had been taken. Uncertainty as to the future of the Treaty could easily weaken the effect of those systematic reviews. Uncertainty concerning the duration of the Treaty could also have a negative effect on the will of the nuclear-weapon States to implement further disarmament measures.

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Indefinite extension of the Treaty would reinforce the global non-nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-proliferation norm. Extending it for a short fixed period would send a signal to would-be proliferators that the international community was no longer seeking the indefinite prevention of nuclear proliferation, but some lesser goal.

51. While a non-proliferation treaty of indefinite duration was not sufficient to ensure total nuclear disarmament, giving the Treaty permanent legal status provided the best possible framework for a continuation of efforts towards a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons. In that regard, rapid progress was needed on a number of interrelated issues which included the need for all nuclear Powers to reconfirm their commitment to the aim of a nuclear-free world and a firm commitment on the part of such Powers to abstain from the threat of use or the use of nuclear weapons against States which did not possess such weapons. A comprehensive ban on all nuclear testing had been a priority arms control issue for the Norwegian Government for many years and negotiations in that regard should be speeded up. In his opinion, the notion of nuclear explosions for so-called peaceful purposes should be rejected. Norway also believed that concrete steps must be taken to establish a regime that would include declarations of stockpiles of all weapons-grade materials accompanied by other appropriate transparency measures, while more effective measures should be agreed upon for registering, managing and monitoring existing stocks of plutonium in order to address the growing international concern about the illegal transfer and smuggling of nuclear material of weapons-grade quality. The safe and secure storage and handling of fissile material was also a matter of urgency if further environmental degradation was to be prevented from following in the wake of a comprehensive disarmament process. Norway welcomed the efforts under the auspices of IAEA to draw up an international convention on the safety of radioactive waste management.

52. The end of the cold war had uncovered large-scale military related environmental damage of an inherently cross-border character, affecting entire regions and spanning several countries. The question of how to allocate sufficient resources to deal with those challenges was a matter of urgency.

53. The current downgrading of the role of nuclear weapons in international affairs was of paramount importance. His Government therefore welcomed the political will in the United States and the Russian Federation to seek an agreement on further reductions and limitations of strategic forces beyond the stipulations of the START II Treaty and the will on the part of the British and French authorities to implement further reductions. The fact that non-nuclear-weapon States de-emphasized the importance of a nuclear deterrent to national security not only reduced the role of nuclear weapons as such but should also influence the thinking of other States on that issue.

54. Preventing proliferation was a matter of political will to which the non-proliferation regime as a whole contributed. The first and most important barrier to proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction was an international political order which made those weapons meaningless. International cooperation to resolve regional and local conflicts was indispensable and should therefore be seen in the context of non-proliferation. Confidence-building measures could help to improve relations

between States by replacing distrust, tension and uncertainty with confidence, stability and cooperation.

ELECTION OF CHAIRMEN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN OF THE MAIN COMMITTEES, THE DRAFTING COMMITTEE AND THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE (continued) (agenda item 8)

55. The PRESIDENT said that Mr. Rajab Sukayri (Jordan) had been nominated for the post of Vice-Chairman of Main Committee II, Mr. Gustavo Alvarez Goyoaga (Uruguay) for the post of Vice-Chairman of Main Committee III and Mr. Nabil Fahmy (Egypt) for the post of Vice-Chairman of the Drafting Committee. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Conference wished to approve the nominations.

56. It was so decided.

ELECTION OF VICE-PRESIDENTS (agenda item 9)

57. The PRESIDENT announced the following nominations for the posts of Vice-President: for the Group of Eastern European and Other States: Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic and Ukraine; for the Group of Western European and Other States: Australia, Austria, Canada, Finland, France, Japan, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America; for the Group of Non-Aligned and Other States: Algeria, Bangladesh, Cameroon, the People's Republic of China, the Congo, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Peru, South Africa, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Venezuela. If there was no objection, he would take it that the Conference wished to approve the nominations.

58. It was so decided.

APPOINTMENT OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE (agenda item 10 (a))

59. The PRESIDENT proposed Armenia, Germany, Italy, Lesotho, Lithuania and Myanmar as members of the Credentials Committee. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Conference agreed with the proposal.

60. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.